

Helix namoiensis Cox, 1868: synonym of the North American zonitid *Mesomphix* (*Omphalina*) *cupreus* (Rafinesque, 1831)

Cox (1868) described *Helix namoiensis* with the accompanying type locality of Namoi River, New South Wales. Originally described in the Section *Patula*, this taxon was later referred to the family Rhytididae by Iredale (1933) and given separate generic recognition in the monotypic genus *Namoitena* Iredale, 1933. This was on account of the lack of sculpture on the upper surface of the teleoconch in contrast to the radially ribbed teleoconch of most other Australian rhytidids. Smith (1992) relegated *Namoitena* to a subgenus of *Strangesta* Iredale, 1933, included a range of other species, and placed *H. namoiensis* in the synonymy of the Sydney Basin *Strangesta strangei* (Pfeiffer, 1849). Both taxonomic decisions were made without supplied reasons. Following examination by the author of all rhytidid material in the collections of the Queensland and Australian Museums, in preparation for a field guide on eastern Australian land snails (Stanisic *et al.* 2010), the conclusion was that the type specimen, and only known specimen, did not represent an Australian species and so excluded this species from the Australian land snail fauna. This decision was also complemented by the author's personal knowledge of the land snails of the Namoi River drainage based on extensive field work in the area. Subsequent examination of overseas material in the Australian Museum showed that *Helix namoiensis* most closely resembled species of the Northern Hemisphere family Zonitidae, in particular the North American genus *Mesomphix*.

The specimen of *H. namoiensis* was presented to Cox by a friend, Mr Walker Scott, with no details of its origins (Cox 1868). One can only surmise that the spurious locality also came with the specimen.

The type specimen of *Helix namoiensis* (AMSC.87296) is sub-adult (diameter 21.5 mm) but is distinguished by its olive-brown colour, almost flat spire, worn apex, rounded whorls, open umbilicus and simple lip that is darkened on the outside, opalescent within. This combination of characters, in particular the worn apical whorls, externally blackened lip and open umbilicus correspond to that of *Mesomphix cupreus* (Rafinesque, 1831) from the eastern United States (Pilsbry 1946; Burch 1962). Illustrations of the two species are presented in Figure 1.

Hence the following new synonymies, in addition to those given in Pilsbry (1946), are proposed:

Mesomphix Rafinesque, 1819

Namoitena Iredale, 1933: 49; Iredale, 1938: 121; Smith 1992: 302 (as a subgenus of *Strangesta* Iredale, 1933).

Mesomphix cupreus (Rafinesque, 1831)

Helix namoiensis Cox, 1868: 29; Smith, 1992: 303 [as a synonym of *Strangesta strangei* (Pfeiffer, 1849)].

Namoitena namoiensis (Cox). Iredale, 1933: 49; Iredale, 1938: 121; Iredale, 1943: 69.

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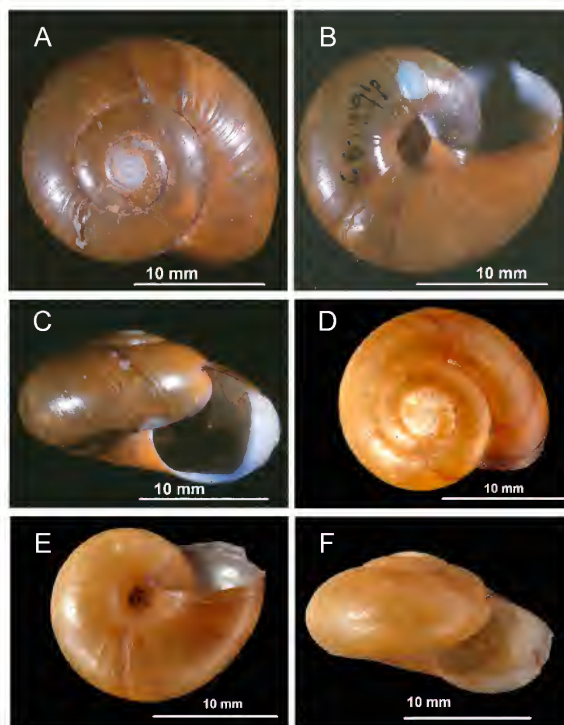


FIG. 1. A-C, *Helix namoiensis* Cox, 1868. Namoi River, New South Wales, holotype, AMSC.87296; D-F, *Mesomphix cupreus* (Rafinesque, 1831). Indiana, United States of America.

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